

12.

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

SALTERS-HALL, April 25th, 1793.

By NOAH HILL.

21

LONDON, 25th April 1793.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Correspondent
Board of the Society in Scotland for propagating
Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands;

Resolved Unanimously,

That the Thanks of this Board be given to the
Rev. NOAH HILL, for his Sermon preached before
them this Day; and that he be requested to permit
the same to be printed for the Use of the Society.

HENRY HUNTER, Secretary.



A Father to the Poor:

A

12

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

Salters-Hall, April 25th, 1793.

BEFORE

THE CORRESPONDENT BOARD IN LONDON

OF THE

SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

(Incorporated by Royal Charter)

FOR

PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

In the Highlands and Islands.

By NOAH HILL.

Published at the Request of the Society, and of the
Correspondent Board in London.

L O N D O N :

Printed by A. STRAHAN, Printer to the Society;
And to be had (gratis) at *Scotch Hall, Crane Court, Fleet-
street*; and at the Secretary's, *Bethnal Green Road*.

MDCCXCIV.

to the Press

S. E. R. M. O. N.

PRINTED AT

Salisbury-Hall, April 25th, 1793.

THE CORRESPONDENT BOARD IN LONDON

SCOTTISH IN SCOTLAND



PROVINCIAL KNOWLEDGE

BY NOAH MILLER

Published at the Request of the Society, and of the
Correspondent Board in London.

L O N D O N :

Printed by A. STRAHAN, Printer to the Society;

And to be had (gratis) at Great Hall, Green Court, &c.
West, and at the Secretary's, Bristol Church Lane.

MDCXCIII.

A FATHER TO THE POOR:

A

S E R M O N.

IF I hesitated a moment, when application was made to engage me in this service, I hope it will be considered, by this respectable auditory, as arising solely from an apprehension that a preacher might have been easily found, who would have pleaded that excellent cause you patronize, with greater effect. In an approbation of that cause, a conviction of its importance, and zeal for its continued and increasing support and prosperity, I can yield to none. As far as my knowledge of charitable institutions in this, or any other country, extends, I am bound to pronounce that which claims your attention this day, the best;—uniting more of the essential interests of our fellow-creatures, in the lower classes of life, than any other.

B

After

After the many excellent discourses this distinguished charity has brought before the public, in the two grand divisions of the kingdom, I have it not, even in hope, to advance one new thought—to represent it in any one point of light in which it has not already appeared—or to address any one new motive to the understanding, or the heart.—But as something in the form of a Sermon is still annually expected, I cheerfully cast that “mite” into your treasury; and refer you, as a text, to

JOB, XXIX. 16.

I WAS A FATHER TO THE POOR.

IN whatever estimation the abilities, or the heart, of my worthy and Reverend Brother * may be held, who brought forward, on this occasion, an instructive and striking trait in Job's character; it can be deemed no reflection, if I go on a supposition that he has not exhausted the example of Job as it applies to a cause he so ably pleaded.

Whatever entertainment it might afford to the critical part of my auditory to discuss the questions to which this celebrated book of Job

* The Rev. WILLIAM SMITH, A. M.

has given rise; namely; Who was the real author of the book? At what period of time Job lived? How far this book may be considered as an historical narrative, as to persons and facts? And what farther end it might be designed to answer than to hold up an affecting and instructive view of the instability of all human affairs; a great example of piety, benevolence, and patience; and a striking proof that, in the present state, no conclusion can be drawn from the prosperity or adversity of individuals, as to their moral character, or the place they hold in the Divine approbation? I should think it wrong, by the discussion of these curious questions, to divert your attention from that great and good design on which we are now met. I shall only remark (as what seems sufficiently clear), that there was such a person as Job,—that in his life the extremes of every thing prosperous and adverse met,—and that it is difficult to say, whether, when standing on the pinnacle of human felicity, or when sunk into the depth of woe, he is the greater and more instructive example.

My text is a part of his noble vindication of himself from a charge of hypocrisy and impiety,—a charge that must deeply wound his heart; proceeding on the most mistaken grounds; and brought by friends who should

have soothed his sorrows, assuaged his grief, and poured into all his wounds the balm of comfort.

That height of prosperity, which proves a dangerous and fatal snare to thousands; turns them giddy, even to madness; makes them equally unmindful of that Great Being who is above them, and of those of their fellow-creatures in the lowest class of life; steeling their hearts against every sentiment of piety and compassion; was a very different thing to Job. Whilst it improved and animated his regards for God, it rendered him an extensive blessing to those whom Providence had placed in such circumstances as to need his patronage and succour. So far was he from considering the poor as made for him,—so far from neglecting and oppressing them,—that his wealth, and its attendant influence, prompted him to become their advocate; to befriend the friendless; and to attempt the relief of every species of human distress.

The fatherless, the friendless, and distressed,
Call'd me their Saviour, and my name they blest.

The feeble found in me a powerful stay,

The poor a father, and the blind man day.

The stranger's friend; I weigh'd his slighted cause;
Broke rapine's teeth, and snatch'd him from its jaws.

SCOT on JOB.

I was

I was a Father to the Poor.

It is not easy to find, in the whole book of God, a few words that express more, or speak more directly to the heart.

The *paternal character* is well known, both as to what it comprehends, and the objects to which it applies. It always includes a real, tender, and affectionate concern for its immediate objects; and an expression of this concern in unremitted endeavours to promote their most essential good—their good for time and eternity. That man is not a father—has no claim to that honourable, endearing appellation—who is a stranger to an affectionate prevailing concern for the best interest of his children, or who fails in a constant expression of it, in well-directed endeavours, under God, to promote it. Oh! may this characterize parents present! In their children may their own virtues appear and shine: and in their descendants, may every thing be handed down to the latest age of the world that can adorn the human character, or dignify human life!—But what more immediately calls for your attention is,

FIRST, The *Paternal Character* as it respects the *Poor*; of which we have in Job an instructive and illustrious example. It includes,

1. A

1. A real and affectionate concern for the poor.

Job, in his most prosperous and elevated state, had his eye upon those whom the wise providence of God had placed, as to outward circumstances, far below him. He considered himself and them as having the same origin; and as branches of the same family. So far was he from considering them as made for his aggrandizement; to do him homage; to wait his nod; that he saw and respected himself in them; made their cause his own, entered into their afflictions, and had a heart to feel for all their wants, and sorrows.

He who can adopt the language of my text, will look beyond himself, and his immediate connections; and consider that as belonging to him which respects the poor. It is a personal interest he feels in what concerns them. He will not turn away from the tale of woe; but enter into every painful part, with sympathetic feeling. What is another's case, might have been his own: and he knows not what may be. He will not look on the *children* of the poor as an indifferent spectator—on their various and pressing wants as to soul and body—and the dangers and temptations to which they stand exposed.

exposed. There will be no small portion of that, in the feelings of his own heart, which he would wish in the hearts of others towards his own children, should they be brought into the same unhappy situation.—But the character of a “Father to the Poor” goes farther than a concern for them, however feeling and benevolent: for where an ability is given, it includes also,

2. Well-digested schemes, and well-directed endeavours to promote, under God, their temporal and eternal good.

It does not rest in a “be ye warmed—clothed—fed—taught;” but will make provision that these may be done. It is from what is actually attempted by those on whom the providence of God has smiled, we learn, as in the case of Job, the kind and compassionate feelings of their hearts. There can be no true charity, among the affluent, without liberality.

Various are the ways in which good may be attempted, and by which a man may shew himself a “Father to the Poor.” This fallen world opens a widely extended field for the exercise of every compassionate and benevolent principle in the heart.

The paternal character has a relation to the *Bodies* of the poor, as that of a father, to the bodies of his immediate offspring. The sick, the lame, the blind, the infirm, and the aged; those who have it not in their power to procure raiment to clothe them, or bread to eat, are calling upon such as have ability to relieve them, in a very forcible manner. If my heart were bent on doing good only to the bodies of men, where could I walk, in this afflicted world, and miss of an object? I cannot but remark the pleasure and gratitude the humane must feel, on the sight of so many edifices rising in this great city, and suburbs, and throughout the nation, as refuges for human calamities, not excepting even those which have been the result of the most criminal excesses, and most abandoned courses. Oh, that vital, practical, experimental godliness, were as much the character of the age, as compassion and liberality!—He who is a “Father to the Poor,” will lend his hand to the design you patronize, even on the ground of the respect it has to the worldly interest of its objects. By the principles of useful knowledge, early instilled, and the habits of industry, early formed, the numerous objects of your charity come forward into life with advantage. They are put into a way, under Providence, of feeding and clothing themselves; and, instead of
being

being a burden to the community, may, ere long, help to bear its burdens, and become its ornaments and blessings. He who is a "Father to the Poor," must wish success to these Chartered Schools, and to the several parts of the plan this great charity embraces, were there no other world, and no other interests but those which relate to time.

But amidst the various objects the man attends to and consults, who can adopt Job's language, none are so important as the *Souls* of the poor, whether parents or children, and their eternal well-being. The Great Father of Spirits has consulted the good of souls in the most wondrous ways. For what did the Son of God come down from heaven; preach the everlasting gospel; set before the world a perfect example; submit to every species of indignity; and, at length, give himself up to an ignominious, excruciating death, even that of a cross; but for the souls of men, as they are endangered and immortal? The Saviour had souls, and their invaluable interests, in principal view, in his various and miraculous works on the bodies of men. When thousands were fed on the mountain, it was that the bread of life, the bread of God that came down from heaven, might be known, received, and the perishing souls of men live

and be happy for ever. If diseases, of every painful name, were healed, it was with this farther exalted view, that the maladies of souls, far more dangerous and dreadful, might be cured: and in raising the dead to life, the gracious intention of the Redeemer's heart was still directed to a nobler resurrection, the resurrection of the souls of men. There was not a demonstration he gave of Divine power in the natural world—not a discourse he delivered—not a tear he shed—not an indignity he endured—not a pang he felt—but had the souls of men in view; their redemption from eternal death; their living to God now, and with him for ever: and I need not add that it is to souls every character refers he now sustains.

It was for the souls of men, the Apostles, those illustrious Fathers of the Poor, laboured beyond all human example. And there is no employment in which we can engage, so kind, important, and noble, as this. Whatever stress men may lay on their worldly concerns, they are but for a moment. There is an eternity of happiness or misery before us all. By a cordial reception of Christ, a dependence upon him, and devotedness to him, the curses of a broken law are averted, and the flames of hell escaped. It is in grace in the heart upon earth that future
glory

glory is begun.—Now, if any thing can be done by our instrumentality for the introduction of Christian principles—for the implanting or increasing grace in the hearts of any of the poor, it is being a Father to them in the best and noblest sense we can conceive.

A principal attention to this enters into the parental character with respect to our immediate offspring. Those who bear the name of Fathers and Mothers, who do not consult the immortal interest of their children, are monsters. There is more guilt and cruelty in a neglect on this head, than language can express. Parents are, no doubt, in the way of their duty when exerting themselves for the temporal good of their children, that they may be raised above the painful apprehension of want, meet with the smiles of the world, and appear in life to advantage. But let them never forget there is *another* world; and that there is nothing they can do for their offspring comparable to what respects them as they are immortal. Sensible, as I am, of the charms and attractions of many external accomplishments; I must still think that the least attention to a child's immortal nature will shew parents, that the most important branch of their duty, as such, respects the *souls* of their children, and their eternal felicity.—And he who is a

“ Father to the Poor,” will bend his attention, and direct his exertions, this way. He will devise and patronize those designs by which the best interests of the souls of poor children may be promoted; and that, although they may remain poor as to this world, they may have “ durable riches and righteousness.” Such an institution as that on account of which we are now assembled, in which civil and religious knowledge are blended—soul and body, time and eternity, essentially consulted—will meet his ideas, and every benevolent and pious feeling of his heart; and draw forth his liberal support. That the children of the poor may be brought to know themselves; understand betimes the nature and design of the “ glorious gospel of “ the blessed God;” see an unspeakable suitability and value in the Saviour; and begin, in early life, to live to him; is the grand thing of all, and will be considered as such by him who is a “ Father to the Poor.” He will conceive of this as a species of good that will outweigh, and outlive, every other; and will wish to be an instrument, in the Divine hand, of promoting it.

Now this it is, in a few plain words, to be a “ Father to the Poor.” Be this your ambition, and my own. Ye Nobles—Princes of the Earth—

Earth—Rulers of Kingdoms! Be ye more—
greater—happier, if ye can.

Should I,

SECONDLY, Advance something by way of recommending and urging the Paternal Character, as it respects the Poor, I hope I shall not be considered as coming here to reflect on the understanding of my hearers, which I hold in great respect: and am persuaded I might safely leave the character I have drawn to speak for itself. There must be an advocate for it in the judgment and feelings of every individual present. That which distinguishes a “Father to the “Poor” is of such extent and universal influence—it comprehends so many of those ways by which we may promote the temporal, spiritual, and eternal advantage of others—and is itself so truly noble—that persuasion seems out of the question.

If I were at liberty to suppose there was any call to urge an imitation of Job's example, I would fetch an argument from the very constitution of human nature. I would bring forward the principle of self-love, common to us all. In the ruins of the fall—the wreck of human nature—there is that left which feels for the distresses of
others,

others, and prompts us to provide for their relief. When we attend to the wants and calamities of others, there are feelings and emotions excited in our breasts, in no small degree independent of ourselves. The providence of God, having, for great reasons, permitted such inequalities in men's outward circumstances; he has made a gracious provision in the very heart of man. Lest the poor and the wretched should be lost—lest poor children should fall an universal prey to ignorance and vice—God has implanted in the human heart a sense of pity that stands their friend, pleads their cause, and will give no rest till something is attempted for their relief. Those very acts of kindness which distinguish a “Father to the Poor,” must be attended with present pleasure, because they are a gratification of that which God has wrought, more or less, into the constitution of every man. It was the Saviour's maxim, “it is more blessed “to give than to receive.” A relief, seasonably obtained, does not afford more pleasure, than the act of relieving to a truly pious and benevolent heart. There are some ways of doing good; among which I must class the adopting poor children—rescuing them from ignorance and vice—furnishing their young minds with principles that may fortify them against temptations—making the best provision, opportunity
and

and ability will admit, for their temporal, and eternal good; in which the pleasure becomes a kind of luxury. Doing good in the several ways proposed by that great charity for which I this day plead is, if I may so speak, the Epicurism of virtue. He who knows nothing of the pleasure of doing good—the pleasure (I was going to say) of weeping with them who weep; of alleviating sorrow; of lightening some burden that pressed heavy upon a fellow-creature; of relieving some poor widow in distress, or some fatherless child; knows not what pleasure means. Whatever he may have of this world's good; and however gay and happy, he may, at seasons, appear; he is an object of pity. Oh, that persons in the higher ranks of life, universally knew, that when they turn away from the distressed, pay no attention to their complaints, and attempt nothing for their relief, they lose the most exquisite pleasure human nature is capable of enjoying; and make their superiority, what we often find it, a snare to themselves, and a grievance to the rest of the world!

The Paternal Character, when the poor are its objects, stands recommended on this farther ground, namely, as it is more divine—more god-like—than any thing else within the reach and ability

lity of man. It is our best resemblance to Him who *is* good, and who *doth* good—a resemblance in that which God esteems his greatest glory ; his goodness ; that perfection of Deity which sheds a lustre on every other. Infernal spirits may possess power, knowledge, and the like, in a far greater degree than any of the human race. There is no one thing in which created natures can be so much the image of God, as in a prevailing disposition to alleviate the woes, and promote the happiness, of others. God is the universal Father. All other beings are, in themselves, poor. Upon him they are ever dependent. His providential care and kindness extend to them all : and there is no degree of comfort and felicity enjoyed, in any part of this vast universe, but what is bestowed by the “ Father of Lights, from whom cometh down “ every good and perfect gift.” God has taken this appellation of Father : and it is given him by the Saviour as that under which we may conceive of, and address, him : and there is none other he sustains so kind and condescending, or to which his dispensations better apply. In lightening the burdens, and relieving the distresses of others—in rendering them as happy as lies in our power—in being kind to the poor ; taking their children by the hand ; taking them under our protection ; providing
for

for their instruction in matters relating to both worlds; seeking their temporal and eternal good; is "following God as dear children." It is doing what he does; and is the best representation we can make of him in the world.—

This circumstance exalts and dignifies the character I am holding up for your imitation; places your kind attention to the design you have this day in view, in a point of light that tend to strike the mind; and must shew that the highest accomplishment and perfection of our being is the spirit and employment of a "Father to the Poor." To look no farther than ourselves, and our own petty concerns, is the indication of a little, mean, ignoble spirit: whereas the cares, schemes, exertions of a soul truly great—a soul that partakes of a Divine nature, and is like God—extend to a general good.

It might, also, be observed, by way of motive, that he who is a "Father to the Poor," makes that very use of talents and advantages which God designed. The manifold gifts of God are in trust. With respect to what we are said to possess, we are rather stewards than proprietors. The Sovereign Lord and Disposer of all things, has assigned to every man his particular place; given him a part to act; and fur-

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nished

nished him with abilities of mind and body, in the application of which he is to glorify God, and be a friend and benefactor to others. There is no man but is in the possession of something that may be so employed as to advance the general good. Let not any one think himself exempted from the offices of liberality by a straitened condition. If he is raised, in any degree, above indigence, he is blest with ability to cast "two mites into the treasury" of God: and if this is done at the expence of some superfluous gratification, which is to be found in almost every condition; it will meet with double honour, and be accepted by our common Master, not only as an offering of divine bounty, but an act of holy self-denial. "No man liveth unto himself:" no man ought; and no good man does or can. There is a certain right and interest which others have in us. If we are so made, and circumstanced, as that the help and assistance of others are requisite to our happiness in the world, we can plead no exemption from being, in our places, beneficial to others. It is with men in society, as with the several parts of the natural body. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you." Whatever inequality there may be among men as to mental endowments or external condition, there

there cannot be a greater mistake than that any talent is given for themselves alone, their own private gratification and emolument, without any respect to the advantage of others. That wise Providence which is perpetually bringing good out of human evil, though it permits the distinctions of wealth and poverty to continue among men, yet makes them the ground of mutual connexion and dependance, and a motive for exercising various holy and benevolent tempers both with respect to God and each other. Thus, in the estimation of Divine wisdom and goodness, the rich being considered as treasurers and stewards for the poor; the honour of dispensing was conferred on the one, as a tie to fidelity; and a kind of right of participation given to the other, as a security from want: the privilege of attaining the high reward of beneficence was given to the rich; and the glory of the great prize of patience; contentment, peaceableness, gratitude, and industry, reserved for the poor. The truth is, the more we enjoy, the greater charge we have upon our hands, and the more plentiful the returns which God expects: for "of them to whom much is given, much will be required." It is so far from being a severe law of religion, to make use of riches to promote the best interest of those who need our assistance, that a truly wise man would

rejoice in that religion which teaches him to be more happy in what he gives than in what he keeps for himself,—which enables him to make the food and raiment he spares for others, greater blessings to him than those with which he feeds and clothes himself. And, besides,—

The character of a “Father to the Poor” enters into the main and substantial part of Christianity. In what a narrow compass does his religion lie who is only just! Nay, may I not say that the man who, in all cases, is rigidly so, is a stranger to religion? The religion of the holy, compassionate, benevolent Jesus, is not a negative thing. Observe how the final sentence runs; “I was hungry, and ye gave me
“no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink;
“naked, and ye clothed me not,” &c. Here is no charge of injustice, rapine, oppression: but of a great duty neglected,—something not done, when both opportunity and ability were afforded. The want of that temper that enters essentially into the character, the imitation of which I am now urging; and the appropriation of wealth to self, as to possession and enjoyment; is the ground of almost all the woes denounced against rich men in the gospel. “Go to now, ye rich
“men, and howl for your miseries that shall
“come upon you. Your riches are corrupted,
“and

" and your garments are moth-eaten. Your
 " gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of
 " them shall be a witness against you, and shall
 " eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped
 " treasure together for the last days." Jam.
 c. v. 1, 2, 3. The parable of the rich man
 and Lazarus, is particularly intended to shew the
 impossibility of a man's living to himself on
 earth, and having God for his portion hereafter.
 Here is a rich man, who employed his wealth
 for the gratification of his pride and sensual ap-
 petites, " in torments;" and a beggar, patiently
 bearing neglect, want, and wretchedness, the
 " care of Angels," and in " Abraham's bosom."
 So far is the appropriation of wealth to a man's
 self, without any application of it for the benefit
 of others, from consisting with the religion of
 the gospel, that we learn from what passed be-
 tween the Saviour and the young Ruler, who
 came to him with the most important of all
 questions, that it is itself able to destroy the
 efficacy of many amiable virtues. The great
 and invariable design of redeeming love is to
 alleviate, and gradually remove, the distresses of
 human life; all the evils and disorders that are
 born of sin: and, as a concurrence with this
 design, on the part of man, is an evidence of
 repentance, faith, and an interest in the Divine
 favour; so an opposition to it is equally an evi-
 dence

dence of obduracy, infidelity, and Divine displeasure. The fundamental law of Christianity is love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God "with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and "with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as "thyself." To this the temper of every mind is to be conformed: by this the actions of every life are to be regulated. If we always had recourse to this plain, unerring rule, we should know what was proper to be done; what was improperly omitted; and could be at no loss respecting the contrariety there is between genuine Christianity and an application of wealth, influence, or talents of any kind, to our own separate and personal use. That principle of Divine charity that enters so materially into the character of a "Father to the Poor," is inseparable from that divine nature of which every child of God partakes. It is the end and perfection of faith and hope: and when the one is lost in vision, and the other in enjoyment, will remain an eternal principle of life and happiness. The Christian (who must be supposed to have devoted his heart, through grace, to the love of his God, his Redeemer, and his neighbour) is most reasonably expected to give continual demonstrations of that love in the exercise of meekness, humility, patience, kindness, liberality, and mercy. "Whosoever has this

"world's goods, and seeth his brother have
 "need, and shutteth up his bowels of compas-
 "sion from him, how dwelleth the love of God
 "in him?" is the pointed question of an in-
 spired Apostle. Can he who is prevaillingly
 backward to do good—to do good in such ways
 as that institution embraces, for which I, this day,
 appear an advocate—be a disciple of him who
 "went about doing good;" whose meat and
 drink it was; and the complexion of whose
 heart, and the leading features of whose life,
 were compassion and kindness? Christianity,
 without that which enters into the character of a
 "Father to the Poor," is a stream cut off from
 its source,—a body without the soul,—a sun
 without light and heat. And I need not add,
 that of all the motives to engage men to be
 kind to one another; to study and promote the
 temporal and eternal good of their fellow-crea-
 tures; the strongest, and such as appeal the
 most directly to the heart, are those which
 Christianity brings forward.

And it may merit some attention, that the
 Paternal Character, when its objects are the
 Poor, whether parents or children, is highly
 commendable to men. There is no one thing
 in the approving and applauding of which the
 Heathen, Jewish, and Christian world, are so
 unanimous.

unanimous. We cannot withhold our approbation of a humane, kind, benevolent character, do what we will. Christian charity, that feels for human necessities and woes, makes the cause of others its own; and is bent on scattering the seeds of useful knowledge, virtue, piety, happiness, through as wide a field as possible; has a charm, more or less, for every man, however mankind may differ in other things. The miser must approve it, notwithstanding the cold, unfeeling, stony contexture of his heart. It is what we think on with complacency and pleasure, independent of any advantage we ourselves may derive. It forms the attraction we all feel. It is that to which our hearts attach themselves. What gives the star upon the breast its lustre, is the heart that is lodged within that breast. Humane and generous feelings are the water of those diamonds that sparkle on the monarch's brow; and he is a king, and dignifies his exalted station, in the degree in which he is a Father to his people; and especially to the poor among his subjects. What is the most finished of human characters, if that is wanting of which we have in my text so great an example? What is every thing Cæsar's encomiasts have said to raise and perpetuate his fame, when compared with those few words of fiction?

“ When

" When the Poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept."

SHAKESPEAR.

But there is a surer test of excellence still; a higher tribunal than men can erect: and I am authorized to say, in addition to what has been already advanced, that the Paternal Character as it respects the Poor, is highly pleasing to God. It is what his precepts enjoin,—what he has encouraged by many a promise,—what he has expressed great pleasure in, and engaged to reward both here and hereafter. It is his own image; which he must approve. We are expressly told, " the Lord loveth a cheerful " giver:" and, by the same Apostle, that " doing good, and communicating, is a sacrifice with which God is well-pleased." So acceptable a sacrifice is this, that we are taught God considers what is given to the poor as lent unto himself. The number of precepts on this very head under both dispensations, and the forcible manner in which it is urged, must shew in what estimation our Heavenly Father holds the Paternal Character when the poor are its objects: and the approbation of no created mind, whether human or angelic, can stamp such an excellence as Divine approbation.

And, by way of recommending the character now before us, and urging an imitation, I shall

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only

only hint at the solid comfort and felicity that will ever result from it. Besides the sweet pleasure attending the very act of beneficence, that is its present reward; there is a satisfaction and enjoyment that are permanent. The pleasures many court are short-lived—transient—a flash, that is gone in a moment. They will not bear reflection. They leave a sting behind them. Their ghosts will follow them like their shadow.—But generous sentiments in a Christian's breast, employing his hands in relieving distress; promoting the good of others; providing instruction for the children of the poor; and laying a foundation, under God, for their becoming useful members of the community, wise, good, happy; will administer a lasting pleasure. The reflection will afford singular joy and comfort. Though there is no merit in any thing we are, can be, or do; yet a truly pious and benevolent disposition and conduct, will be for a testimony in life, at death, and on the judgment day. Oh! what a pleasure must it be to be able, in the closing scenes of life, to indulge the thought that we have not been cumberers of the ground; useless in our day: but, through grace, exerted ourselves for God, Christ, and the good of our fellow-creatures in the world, according to our abilities; that we have not failed to impart of what God, in his
provi-

providence, bestowed upon us; nor “ withheld
 “ the poor from their desire, nor good from
 “ him to whom it was due, when it was in the
 “ power of our hand to do it.”

And when the last judgment shall come, we shall find, that in laying out this way, we have been “ laying up in store a good foundation “ against the time to come.” It is a circumstance that claims the constant attention of every mind, and should awaken and warm every stupid and selfish heart; not only that the last awful decision, when every man is to receive according to his deeds, is represented as arising from acts of mercy to the poor, and the neglect of them; but that the Judge has dignified them by the adoption of “ brethren;” and as the substitutes of his own person, has considered the different conduct of mankind towards them, as so many acts of mercy and cruelty to himself: “ Inas-
 “ much as ye have done it, or not done it, to
 “ *one of the least of these my brethren*, ye have
 “ done it, or not done it, to *me*.” If the character of which you have been hearing, and which Job eminently supported, be our own, of this we may rest assured, that Christ will own us at last as “ workers together with him;” that he will solemnly confess us before his Father, in the view of men and angels, not only as the

purchase of his blood, but as the instruments of his kingdom, the supporters of his cause, and the promoters of his interest and glory in the lower world.

I am persuaded my hearers can need no information respecting the origin, and general progress, of the *Society in Scotland, incorporated by Royal Charter, for propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands.*

The principal attention of this Charity has been hitherto directed to the instruction of the children of the poor, in those parts of Scotland most involved in ignorance and darkness. Such disaffection to Government did still remain,—such hold had popery got and maintained,—such deep-rooted prejudices were discoverable,—and so totally uncultivated were the minds of many, through very extensive districts; that these schools, in the manner in which they are conducted, uniting the most valuable interests, civil and sacred, were the best expedients human wisdom, piety, benevolence, and public spirit, could devise. What sum of good has been, under God, already obtained, is not for me to estimate. When I think of the FIFTEEN THOUSAND children, at this moment, under the means of such instruction

tion for both worlds as these schools afford; my soul exults: and I must be lost to every principle dear and sacred to the human species, if I did not warmly wish their continued, and increasing, support.

The providence of God having opened great and unexpected resources; the truly respectable managers of this Charity have been enabled to enlarge their plan, by augmenting the salaries of their school-masters, according to their merit and necessities,—by publishing, and diffusing as extensively as possible, the Scriptures in the Gaelic, for the use of that vast body of people in the Highlands and Islands, who are altogether ignorant of, or but imperfectly acquainted with, the English language: (and I hope, by this time, the intended impression of the Gaelic New Testament, consisting of 20,000 copies, is in circulation,)—by establishing new schools for the English language, religion, and literature;—by giving encouragement to the introduction of useful industry and manufactures;—by establishing missionary ministers in those parts where, from the great extent of the parishes, an increase in the number of ministers is exceedingly desirable,—and by making provision for the training up young men, who
understand

understand the Gaelic, for the ministry in those parts where that language alone is understood.

These objects speak for themselves, and can need no other advocate. They have an eloquence in them to which I have no pretension; and, I trust, they will speak to the heart of every person present to whom God has given an ability.

When we think how wide the field for human culture is; what numbers yet remain uninstructed in matters of highest moment, after subtracting all the thousands to which the benign influence of this Charity has extended; the benevolent and pious heart will bleed on attending to what is annually squandered on dress, luxurious tables, splendid equipages, and pleasures below the dignity of men, which, on a review, cannot yield a moment's satisfaction. It is charity to the Rich and Great,—it is the greatest act of friendship can be shewn them—to remind them of such a charity as this, and to urge their attention to it; that they may learn what pleasure is, and reap the best and noblest fruits of what they possess.

However

However humiliating the view we are often led to take of the religious character of our country, I must say that, though other nations have their benevolent institutions, Britain is yet unrivalled for its number and magnitude. Past ages have left structures and endowments in various parts of this kingdom, the monuments of their generosity and public spirit: and, though they bear away the palm, from both sexes, for private virtue and piety, we cannot yield to them in humanity and benevolence. They are more the character of this age than of any other.

I know there are those, even in these enlightened, liberal times, of a narrow, contracted, feudal spirit, who are no friends to the instruction of poor children. Their objections, as far as they have come to my knowledge, are as ill-founded as they are unfeeling. Whilst cause and effect remain, there will still be poor sufficient for every purpose for which a well-regulated state can need them. Because a family is now in poor and abject circumstances, must the descendants of that family be systematically doomed to everlasting poverty, by being kept in ignorance as to articles without which no alteration in their condition can be expected?

There is in this a certain littleness, paltry jealousy, and hard-heartedness, that are disgraceful to the man.

Genius, courage, abilities for great and noble undertakings, belong to no one class of men, to the exclusion of the rest. The civil and religious interests of our country may need those very abilities which may, eventually, be brought forward by the very charity you patronize and support; though it enters not into its plan. Its design is to better the condition of the most ignorant—of the poorest of the poor,—by instructing them in those things which are essentially connected with their best interest in time and eternity.—By this you consult the good of the State. The more sound knowledge, virtue, religion, and industry, in the lower classes of civil life, the more safe, prosperous, and happy, will the State be.

Let none say that Providence has, of late, done so much for this great design, that there is now no occasion for the continued exertions of individuals. The smiles of Providence are a high recommendation of the design. Individuals

viduals do now evidently appear to be “work-
 “ers together with God,” in their persevering
 countenance and support. Will any desert an
 object because it has Heaven’s sanction? Let
 none say this Charity has resources sufficient,
 whilst there remains one dark corner to be
 enlightened, or any description of our fellow-
 creatures whose condition needs to be bet-
 tered.

I have no conception how the Paternal Cha-
 racter, as it respects the Poor, which has been
 held up to view, and urged on the most weighty
 considerations, can discover itself in a way more
 likely to attain its end, than in the support of
 that great design you have now before you;
 which does so much honour to the wisdom,
 piety, and public spirit, of those who first
 formed it; and of those also who have con-
 tinued to conduct and support it. It takes in
 every object that engages the attention, and
 draws forth the efforts of the man to whom the
 great and dignified character before us belongs.
 Every thing that has, or might have, been
 adduced to recommend that character, is plead-
 ing with you in behalf of this great Northern
 Charity; which (as it strikes me) ranks the

very first in Britain, and every other country, as to the sum of real, substantial good it is calculated to produce, and is actually producing.

A comprehensive benevolence; a compassionate and tender regard to the distresses of human life; are, most apparently, virtues and dignities of the mind: and so invariably are they taught, and effectually inspired, by our common Christianity, that if we feel its power, we must, consequently, feel some fervour of that Divine charity which is ever seeking opportunity to remove evil, and communicate good. The spirit of our religion will expand the heart; and cause us to embrace, with pleasure, such an occasion of promoting the essential interests of others, as is now presented. And if there be a superior blessedness in giving to that of receiving, (which Christ himself has asserted, and the experience of every good mind has confirmed,) we see in the *Fifteen Thousand* poor children, and in all the other objects of this institution, (I was going to say,) our friends and benefactors. A Providence, kind to us, has raised them up, and placed them in our way, to confer on us a greater good

good than they can receive,—to exalt our virtue,—to be witnesses of our charity, monuments of our love;—to appear for us in the day of judgment,—and to raise us, through a Redeemer, to a blessedness infinitely greater than our bounty can bestow.

I am persuaded my respectable Hearers cannot hesitate a moment what part, both duty and interest, are calling upon them to act. Whenever they call, may we all have wisdom and grace to listen and obey. Amen!

F I N I S.



AN
ALPHABETICAL LIST
 OF THE
SUBSCRIBERS and other **CONTRIBUTORS**
 in **LONDON** and the Neighbourhood,
 TO THE
SOCIETY in **SCOTLAND**,
 For propagating **CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE**.

Noblemen and Gentlemen who have served the Office of Steward, are marked *.

Such as have contributed Ten Guineas, or upward, at one payment, or within the year, are marked †.

Ministers who have preached the Annual Sermon, are marked ‡.

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Alburn Robert, Queen-street, Cheapside

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* Anderson Alexander, Broad-street

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*† Brodie Alexander, Carey-street
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Campbell John, Charterhouse-square
* Campbell Robert, King-street Soho
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Chambers John
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Christie William, Wapping
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Coney Bicknel, Leadenhall-street
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* Cummings George

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Fleet-street

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* Duff James, Finsbury-square

Duncan Capt. James, George-yard

Duncan Alexander

* Dury David, Gravel-lane, Southwark

Duthie Alexander, Bethnal-green

E

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Elliot George, Wapping

Ellis Thomas

* Fife

F

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- Forfyth William, Royal Gardens, Kensington
- Freer George, Bell-yard, Temple-bar
- * Fuller William Esq. Treasurer, Lombard-street

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- * Glasgow the Earl of, Welbeck-street
- Glasgow Countess of, ditto
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- Galbreath Capt. James, Colebrooke-row, Islington
- Gardner John, Edinburgh
- Gillies John
- Glen Robert

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(x)

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Goodrich Bartlet, Queen-square
Gordon John
Goss Joseph, Cannon-street
Gillebaud Peter, Spitalfields
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Grant John, Kingston Jamaica
Grant Capt. William, Bets-street, St. George's
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Hume Ninian
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Hunter John, ditto

I

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* Ingram

- * Ingram Robert, Billiter-square
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- Johnston Robert Maxwell, M. D. Brentford
- Butts
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- Keates Peter, Goswell-street
- Kelly —
- Klipin Miss
- † Kippis Rev. Andrew D. D. Crown-street,
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- Knox David, Cooper's-row, Tower-hill

L

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- Lennox Capt. John
- Leslie Robert, Tokenhouse-yard
- Lewis John, St. Paul's Church-yard

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Lifter Daniel
Lorimer Rev. Charles A. M. Shooter's-hill
Lorimer ————— M. D. Charlotte-street,
Portland Chapel
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Lowe Alexander, Parliament-street
Lough James
Lowe Graham

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Macniel
Mackniven Charles
* Mair John, Friday-street, Cheapside
Mair Mrs. ditto

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- Mair Miss, ditto
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amptonshire
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N

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- Neale Mrs. ditto
- Neale John, ditto
- Neave David, Threadneedle-street

Niven

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Nicol John

O

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P

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Paton Captain
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Reid William
* Reynolds John, Barbican
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- Steven Robert, Upper Thames-street
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‡ Toller Rev. Thomas, Lower-street, Islington

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Travers Joseph, Swithin's-lane
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U

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W

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† Wor-

† Worthington Rev. Hugh, Highbury-place,
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Wright Joseph, Milk-street

for 1793.

Y

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David Duns

Henry Hunter Junr

John Mackay

Andrew Wilkie

George Cummings

John Henderson

Richard Mackay

Thomas Tassie

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Alexander Mackintosh

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John Henderson

Robert Jackson

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N. B. If there be any mistakes or omissions
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the Secretary, they shall be corrected in the next
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John Henderson	Henry Hunter Jun.
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Robert Lachlan	Alexander Mackintosh
John Marshall	David Neave
James Taffie	John Young

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